

---

7-15-1982

## *From the Womb of the World*

Michael Collings

Follow this and additional works at: <https://dc.swosu.edu/mythellany>

---

### Recommended Citation

Collings, Michael (1982) "From the Womb of the World," *Mythellany*: Vol. 1 : Iss. 2 , Article 4.  
Available at: <https://dc.swosu.edu/mythellany/vol1/iss2/4>

This Poetry is brought to you for free and open access by the Mythopoeic Society at SWOSU Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Mythellany by an authorized editor of SWOSU Digital Commons. An ADA compliant document is available upon request. For more information, please contact [phillip.fitzsimmons@swosu.edu](mailto:phillip.fitzsimmons@swosu.edu).



---

## Mythcon 51: A VIRTUAL “HALFLING” MYTHCON

July 31 - August 1, 2021 (Saturday and Sunday)

<http://www.mythsoc.org/mythcon/mythcon-51.htm>



## Mythcon 52: The Mythic, the Fantastic, and the Alien

Albuquerque, New Mexico; July 29 - August 1, 2022

<http://www.mythsoc.org/mythcon/mythcon-52.htm>

### Abstract

From the womb of the world whispers a moan  
As the atmosphere shivers, silently slain,  
And the last of  
the High Elves lingers alone.

### Keywords

Poetry; Mythellany; Mythopoeic; From the Womb of the World; Michael Collings

the helm and onto his surcoat like a black waterfall.

"Ho," the Knight of the Oak called in a deep, gruff voice. "Another youngling to face me in a tournament? He is persistent."

Alarik answered haughtily, readying his lance. "I do not come to defend favors, druid! You claim the sword and rank of Urens of Thorn. No brother of our order should be beholding to any armsbearer of Old Night!"

The knight of the Oak threw back his metal-shod head and bellowed rich laughter, pointing his lance at the blade in the wicker basket.

"You would retrieve this for Sir Rabbit? Do you not know that he is a caitiff, poor in arms, and tricks every wandering and likely errant into pursuing his quarrel? You are not the first, sir knight. This Urens has not faced me in two years!"

Shaken, Alarik shouted over the insolent giant's laughter, "You lie!"

The Knight of the Oak chuckled deep in his helm and tossed his antlered crests.

"I do not. The purity of my faith forbids it. Do not mock it. My faith was strong when my kind moved as whole forests through the earth. In those days the harp of the Golden One was the scent of the air and stronger than the bleat from your sword-priests. We did not fear the White One. We did not fear his law; you brought it from your own fear. You loved that White God because you were afraid. You banished us because of your own arrogance, because we did not fit with the terror and dullness your holy men taught. You hate us because you no longer dream, sir knight. You cannot dream, so you drive us into the barrows with your dullness."

Before Alarik could speak, the giant held up a gleaming hand.

"However, I will give you a chance to prove that the tenets of your faith and office are stronger than mine. You may even have this-" pointing contemptuously to Uren's sword, "-if you can unhorse me, lance to lance. But if I am victor, and if you live, you must forsake the metal of your office."

Alarik debated this. To defend a caitiff, if the Knight of the Oak spoke truly, was intolerable; to lose to a servant of pagan Old Night was another, even more distressing matter. A familiar black feeling rose up within him like the fury of wheeling bats.

"Well?" The giant's voice boomed across the clearing.

Alarik licked his lips.

"I agree," he said in a clear, steady tone and began to prepare himself. He chose an approach from the east end of the clearing directly into the sun, something experienced knights usually avoid. With his back to the Black Knight, Alarik pulled off his linen surcoat and tossed it to the ground. Removing the triangular shield from the saddle, he lifted it to fighting position and turned. Alarik allowed himself a bleak smile remembering the cowardly Urens whom he defended, but his will and strategy hardened. He looked up for the challenge.

The early evening sun had left the field half lighted, half in shadow, from the trees at the

other side. Deep in shade near the pavilion, the Knight of the Oak tapped his weapon on the ebony shield, then drove forward laughing, eager for another easy victory.

Alarik spurred his own horse forward, the animal's blue trapper curling back into bright waves.

As the giant rode out of the shadows, he couched the clawed lance, but only ten horse-strides away, Alarik dropped his own lance to the ground and threw his shield aside.

The westering sun, picking out the crucifix engraved on Alarik's breastplate, leapt to meet the giant's charge.

"No!" the Knight of the Oak howled. His lance dropped and his shield shot up too late to parry the light deadly to his kind. A bright bar slid over him. A flash of sparks arose from the giant's helm as he passed.

Alarik watched with fascination as the Knight of the Oak disappeared, appeared again, altering in the shadows beneath the great oaks. The man's outline faded and in his place was a dark shape which writhed and shifted in a funnel of bitter light. Before Alarik, a lithe, malignant shape stared up at him with red-rimmed eyes. It raised its antlered head and bounded into the forest with mighty leaps.

Intending to claim a coward's weapon, Alarik turned and saw he stood alone in an empty clearing. From the twisted arch, Urens shambled forward and screamed with despairing rage, adding his voice to the rapport of the crows. Looking first at the patch of grass where the Pavilion had stood, then at Alarik, he screamed once again with hatred.

Alarik clicked his heels to his horse's sides, and smiling with satisfaction, rode away. ●

#### FROM THE WOMB OF THE WORLD

From the womb of the world whispers a moan  
As the atmosphere shivers, silently slain,  
And the last of the High Elves lingers alone.

Through lead-coffered heavens, rose-clouds blown  
Like derelicts scuttle for fear of the rain --  
From the womb of the world whispers a moan.

And a fire-ball spreading out filagree cones  
On a mountain range, thrumming a legend's refrain  
Where the last of the High Elves lingers alone.

Ashen evergreens, needleless Norns, like bone  
Thrown on cinder-heaps twisting arthritic in pain;  
From the womb of the world whispers a moan.

And brown silicon soil melts glass-down;  
Fertile imaginings struggle in vain,  
And the last of the High Elves lingers alone.

With the last human impulse, the last man alone  
Faults fantasy worlds. He dies, and they wane.  
From the womb of the world whispers a moan,  
And the last of the High Elves lingers ... is gone.

by Michael Collings